

BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 310

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PHONE (907) 842-5257

Tribal Councils
Served by BBNA:

Aleknagik

Chignik Bay

Chignik Lagoon

Chignik Lake

Clarks Point

Curyung

Egegik

Ekuk

Ekwok

Igiugig

Iliamna

Ivanof Bay

Kanatak

King Salmon

Kokhanok

Koliganek

Levelock

Manokotak

Naknek

New Stuyahok

Newhalen

Nondalton

Olsonville

Pedro Bay

Perryville

Pilot Point

Port Heiden

Portage Creek

South Naknek

Togiak

Twin Hills

April 18, 2000

Mr. Eric Taylor
Area Plans Coordinator
ADOT/PF
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK. 99801-7898

Re: Airport Improvement Analysis Technical Memorandum

Dear Mr. Taylor,

Thank you for your presentation during the SWAMC meeting last week.

In our review of the above referenced document we find a number of areas within the document that cause us to have strong reservations regarding the process utilized and the conclusions that are reached.

First, utilizing a model developed for the Y-K Delta might be characterized as attempting to stick a round peg in a square hole. The Bristol Bay Region has only some similarity with Y-K Delta. Our economics are more vibrant with high potential for future growth. The tourism industry is much more active and increasing steadily. The salmon industry alone has a major impact on air transportation needs throughout the region. We are concerned that unless research is conducted within the region, Bristol Bay may find itself hostage to a plan that has the potential of suppressing future growth and development of our region.

Your freight statistics are on the low side. The use of the word "assumed" says to us that this 20-year plan is based upon "our best guess". BBNA's Food Bank alone has a significant impact on freight to the villages, on a daily basis. In a telephone sampling of freight movement in villages, Koliganek has four people involved in mail and freight. One of the stores in the village says that they order stock for the store every two weeks and that alone impacts the amount of freight that flows into that village every day. Contact with the village of Portage revealed that while there may be one scheduled flight into Portage, that village has charter flights daily with as many as five flights a day. The resident that was contacted stated that 338 pounds of freight weekly was way on the low side. The primary point here is that assumptions and the basis of them is not accurate enough for the exercise.

The development of infrastructure in the villages has been steady just in the area of the Tribal governments and their development of public services provided within the villages. In addition to the existing school systems, many villages have "Elderly Nutrition" programs that provide daily services to the elderly. Five villages now have the "Head Start" program within their villages, with more coming on-line in the near future, and the "Food Bank" is a region wide program that ships a substantial amount of food regularly. With the information we have been provided in our sampling, we feel there is a need for research in the Bristol Bay region as to what the real freight movements are.

The length of runways as determined by the analysis suggests that for the next 20 years 3300' runways will be sufficient for villages in Bristol Bay. That length is insufficient now. Heating fuel needs in the villages are increasing and often fuel has to be flown into the villages with runway lengths insufficient to allow a fully loaded C46 or DC3 to land. Making two trips is obviously more expensive and that is what the carriers have to do today. You heard Mike Oneil from Levelock; this village is very serious about their salmon-processing endeavor. A 3300' airstrip will not support that local industry and would be a large factor in that village having success with their business. The efforts there represent real efforts to broaden the economic base in Bristol Bay.

Air transport will continue to be the most viable mode of transportation of goods and services in Bristol Bay for the foreseeable future and any conclusions that are reached need to be based upon contemporary factual data. Therefore, we respectfully request that your department undertake a process that involves the stakeholders in Bristol Bay. The weight and bearing of the current airport improvement analysis is such that it will hold the fate of Bristol Bay hostage for the next 20 years, somewhere between yesterday and today.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Hoeffler", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Terry Hoeffler
Chief Operating Officer